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Posted: December 7, 2010 08:42 AM

NRA's Latest Poster Boy Sounds Like School Shooter

"There is no redemption, There is no forgiveness. I will stare into your eyes as I pull the trigger and laugh as you hit the ground with your last, pathetic breath."

Reading the above quote, one might think they are preparing to read a blog about a school shooter. But the words above are those of James A. D'Cruz, an 18-year-old resident of Lubbock who is suing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the state of Texas in federal court for the right to purchase a handgun from a federally licensed firearms dealer (FFL) and carry a loaded firearm when he leaves his home. D'Cruz says he wants a gun for protection when "shopping in certain parts of the city."

D'Cruz's co-plaintiff? The National Rifle Association (NRA). Chris Cox, executive director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, explains why the organization is challenging a 42-year-old federal law that bars handgun sales from a federally licensed dealer to those under the age of 21: "At 18 years of age, law-abiding citizens in this country are considered adults for almost all purposes and certainly for purposes of the exercise of fundamental constitutional rights." In a separate lawsuit, D'Cruz and the NRA are also targeting a 15-year-old Texas law that prohibits those under the age of 21 from carrying concealed weapons in public.

The NRA has assured the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas that "Mr. D'Cruz is a law-abiding, responsible citizen." D'Cruz's own writings, however, argue otherwise. Screen captures of his publicly accessible Facebook Wall during the period of December 2007 through November 2010 paint the portrait of a young man fascinated by death, violence, firearms, explosives, gangsters, and mass murder. The following is a sampling of messages he posted during that time:



I rob banks for a living, what do you do? John Dillinger

November 15 at 1:46am

[During gangster John Dillinger's bank heists in the 1930s, a dozen victims were killed, including prison officers, police, federal agents, and civilians.]

EXHIBIT

A

5:10-cv-00141-C

the match is lit and it will burn all of us now
September 25 at 12:06pm

I became a criminal because I did not want to become a victim -Tommy Versetti
September 3 at 9:32pm
[Tommy Vercetti , the "Harwood Butcher," is a mobster and psychotic killer who takes over a city in the video game "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City."]

in this field of hundreds begging for their lives, we shall spare none
August 9 at 11:38am

im bored...ill light someone on fire
April 19, 2010 at 9:26pm

"The war will commence. The living will die, and the dead will rise with the devil to devour the world."
April 17 at 8:27pm

The strong will survive and the weak will falter and fall away..
March 22 at 10:07 pm

"I'm feeling like a monster"
February 15, 2010 at 10:21pm

You wanted a war, you got one, now quit whinning and leave before I destroy you further
February 4, 2010 at 9:22pm

If God closes a door, breath calmy, go to your room, grab some c-4, and blow it back open.
January 30, 2010 at 5:42pm

nights like tonight, i cant wait until im in some foreign country with my rifle
January 17 at 9:45pm

Proud to be an infidel
January 13 at 9:46pm

"an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind, thats why I take their heads."
January 13 at 8:59pm

I just want to leave the world colder
January 4, 2010 at 9:31pm

"After hunting men, nothing can compare" -Shooter
December 26, 2009 at 5:47pm

"The caliber of the bullet, shine of the gun, or the gun itself doesn't matter. What matters is who gets shot with it"
December 19, 2009 at 7:51pm

This has been the first worthwhile day in a long time
December 13, 2009 at 9:28pm

The content and tone of these postings is similar to the musings of school shooters like Columbine killers Eric Harris ("I have a goal to destroy as much as possible so I must not be sidetracked by my feelings of sympathy, mercy," "Napalm on sides of skyscrapers and car garages blowing up from exploded gas tanks.... oh man that would be beautiful") and Dylan Klebold ("revenge is sorrow/death is a reprieve/life is a punishment"); Virginia Tech gunman Seung-Hui Cho ("I don't know which uncouth, low-life planet you come from but you disgust me. In fact, you all disgust me"); and Pearl High School shooter Luke Woodham ("I burned the church down, then, danced around it and sung 2 Nine Inch Nails songs, one called 'heresy' and another called 'terrible lie.' Then I robbed a bank and set it on fire. I love to set things on fire"). And it makes one wonder what D'Cruz is writing *privately*, outside the public domain. When the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence commented on his Facebook postings in a November 23 press release, D'Cruz promptly blocked public access to his Wall. D'Cruz also removed a profile pic from his page of him dressed like a gangster and holding what appears to be a submachine gun.

The best case scenario here is that D'Cruz is strikingly immature and incapable of handling the serious responsibilities that come with gun ownership. The worst case scenario is that he's a ticking time bomb in need of psychiatric care. In either case, he's a poster boy for why we should prevent handgun sales to those under 21 years of age.

Equally troubling is the fact that D'Cruz already *can* legally buy a handgun because of a loophole expanded by the NRA in the 1986 "Firearms Owners Protection Act." That law opened the door for "hobbyists" to sell guns to anyone age 18 or over without conducting background checks. "Under the federal law, [18- to 20-year-olds] can buy a handgun out of the back of a van in an alley but not from a federally licensed dealer," said David Thompson, an attorney representing the NRA in the Texas lawsuits, with no apparent sense of how insane that sounds.

The notion that James Madison drafted the Second Amendment to guarantee the right of violence-obsessed teenagers to buy handguns and carry them in public--divorced from any type of civic or military duty--is asinine. It makes a mockery of the vision of our Founders, who respected the rule of law and public virtue alike. The *Washington Post* was exactly right when it said, "There is nothing unconstitutional about the state or federal government determining that a few more years of maturity--and the discipline and wisdom that hopefully comes with such age--are needed before such a youngster is allowed to carry a lethal weapon on the streets."

Even the five justices on the Supreme Court who gave us *Citizens United* have expressed support for reasonable limits on gun ownership. As Justice Scalia wrote in the 5-4 *D.C. v. Heller* decision in 2008, "The Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose: For example, concealed weapons prohibitions have been upheld under the Amendment or state analogues."

The NRA, however, is eager to open up a valuable new market for the gun industry as firearms ownership and recreational shooting continue to decline in the United States. Furthermore, if they get their way, Mr. D'Cruz and gun-toting teenagers won't just be "shopping" in your local malls armed. The NRA is currently active in state legislatures across the country pushing bills that would force colleges and universities to allow the carrying of loaded firearms on their campuses. This includes Texas.

Taken together, its lawsuits and legislative proposals demonstrate the total disregard that the NRA has for public safety and the well-being of young people in our country. Never mind that Americans ages 18-20 age range already account for about 5 percent of the population but nearly 20 percent of homicide and manslaughter arrests. Never mind that their teenage client fantasizes about "hunting men." The NRA never met a gun law it couldn't further erode, no matter what the cost to human life.

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